Private FM Radio Operators

†3189. SHRI LAJPAT RAI :

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that private FM radio operators have shown their inability to deposit license fee;

(b) if so, whether they have also suggested any alternative arrangement;

(c) if so, the details of such arrangements; and

(d) the outstanding amount of license fee to be paid by these private FM radio operators till December, 2002?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD) : (a) to (c) Yes Sir, some licencees have expressed difficulty in carrying on FM radio business under the prevailing licence fee structure and have asked for a 90 day moratorium for the payment of licence fee for Mumbai station.

(d) Till December, 2002, there were no outstanding licence fees, in respect of those licencees, who had not withdrawn till that date.

Corruption in North-East Channel of Doordarshan

†3190. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL :

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that inquiry into the rampant corruption in North-East Channel of Doordarshan has revealed that officials were involved in corrupt practices there;

(b) if so, the outcome of the inquiry;

(c) the names of the persons found guilty on the basis of the said inquiry; and

(d) the action taken against them, so far?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD) : (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati has informed that a preliminary inquiry conducted by them revealed that some of the programmes sanctioned for North East Channel by the then Director, Programme Production Centre (North East) of Doordarshan, Guwahati, were approved in violation of the prescribed guidelines for commissioning of programmes in Doordarshan.

(c) Shri B. Chakraborty, the then Director, Programme Production Centre (North East) of Doordarshan, Guwahati has been *prima facie* found to have committed certain irregularities.

(d) Shri B. Chakraborty has been placed under suspension with effect from 09-04-2003 by Prasar Bharati.

Uplinking Policy for TV news channels

3191. SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI :

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have finally decided upon uplinking policy for TV news channels;

(b) if so, whether any guidelines have been prepared to provide up linking facilities only to companies with 26 per cent or less foreign equity;

(c) whether as reported in the press, uplinking norms have been revised several times;

(d) if so, the details of the guidelines finally approved; and

(e) whether there are several foreign companies whose request for 10 per cent equity is pending with Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD) : (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Government has issued the guidelines for news channels uplinking from India. The Guidelines for uplinking of the foreign owned news channels, *inter-alia*, permit foreign equity holding in the applicant company up to 26% of the total paid up capital and require the company to be registered in India under the Companies Act, 1956 and majority of Directors, CEO and News Editor(s) to be Resident Indians.